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Fowler, W. W. *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero.* Pp. xiii, 362. Price, \$2.25. New York: Macmillan Company, 1909.

This study of the economic and social conditions in the first century B. C., though intended for the class-room, can be read with profit by anyone interested in the broader aspect of social questions at the present day, for the problems which faced the reformer in old Rome were in principle curiously like those of the modern world. On such topics as the crowded condition of city population and its effects, the decay of old religious standards, the unequal distribution of wealth, political corruption among the masses, the food supply, divorce and the decay of family life, the effects of a rising standard of living—on these and many others touched upon in this book much food for reflection is offered. For the early empire and for that of the fourth century the books of Friedländer and Dill have familiarized us with these subjects, but for the last century of the Republic Fowler's book is the only one in English to give us a picture "of life and manners, of education, morals, and religion."

The most interesting portion of the book is undoubtedly the two chapters which deal with the lower population, and the business men and their methods, respectively, for these are subjects on which information is not easily obtained. The Roman proletariat is considered under three heads—how they were housed, how they were clothed and fed and what employments they followed. As to the business men, we are given some real insight into their activities as public contractors and as bankers and usurers and told the lines on which their financial enterprises were organized. There is much here that is new to the average reader and there is a curiously modern flavor about the story of how business and politics went hand in hand. The manipulation of foreign relations so as to advance the private interests of certain bankers and shareholders, while no new story, is clearly pointed out by Fowler and illustrated by the case of Rabirius Postumus and his relations with Egypt. The facts in this case are sketched only in a general way and might well have been supplemented by reference to the excellent study on this financier to be found in Guiraud's *Etudes économiques*.

The discussion of slavery in Chapter VII, while following in many respects the beaten track, is rendered attractive by a wholesome appreciation of the difference between ancient and modern economic conditions. It is true that the depopulation of the provinces was accelerated by this system of forced labor, but without it the development of Italian agriculture would have been impossible. Moreover, it is held that the condition and employment of the free laboring classes was not affected injuriously by the presence of the slaves, and the author supports the contention of Seeck and Wallon that the extensive manumission of slaves at this period, instead of mitigating the evils of the system, had a distinctly injurious effect on Roman life and character.

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